

# THE HOLY ROSARY.

By the Very Rev. Arthur Ryan.



YOU have heard that our Holy Father, the Pope, has preached a crusade. It was time. In the Eternal City of Rome, he, the Vicar of Christ on earth, has been subjected to injustice and indignity.

The Church of God there, at its centre, has been put aside by the powers of the State, has been robbed of possessions which it held by titles the strongest and most ancient in Christendom, and has been thus, as far as it could be, crippled in its executive, as it has been dishonored in its Head. It was time, I say, for the millions of the Church of Christ to rouse themselves and do battle for their sacred rights; and the voice of Leo has proclaimed the meaning and manner of the struggle. We are to fight. We are to prove ourselves loyal Christian warriors. And we arm ourselves, as our leader has armed himself, with the weapon of a thousand battles, the weapon that has never known defeat—the beads of the Holy Rosary.

We may have heard of an instructive fact connected with a great and protracted war that horrified the world some years ago. The fact was this: that the beaten army had, as was afterwards fully proved, the better weapon. Why then were they defeated—for they certainly did not lack courage? Because they did not know how to *use* their terrible rifles. They fired into the air, and ten thousand rounds of ammunition would be spent with little or no result. Now let us learn from that a lesson. Our weapon is good. There can be no mistake about that. It is better than any that can be brought against us. But we must use it aright if we would win with it. Let us now have, as it were, a practice-drill with it, that we may learn its full power, and wield it in defence of the Church, and in our own behalf, with full success.

You have been often told that the Rosary occupies among the devotions of the Church a remarkable position in uniting the two great forms of prayer, mental and vocal. The Fifteen Mysteries

of the Life of Jesus and of His Blessed Mother are so many short meditations proposed to us; and in dwelling on these great incidents of our Redemption, in drawing from them pious affections and resolutions, consists the mental prayer of the Rosary. The vocal prayer, which is the second essential part, is made up, as you know, of the familiar Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be to the Father. Now the Rosary proper, as commended by our Lady to St. Dominic, and as indulgenced by the Church, unites these two forms of prayer together, weaving, if I may so speak, one in through the other. To the poor and utterly illiterate the mental part is not required for the Indulgence—they have had a special grant from Pope Benedict XIV. But to almost all of us, who are instructed in the method of prayer and in the several Mysteries of our Redemption, this union of the *Paters* and *Aves* with the consideration of the Mysteries is essential, and without such union we do not gain the Rosary Indulgence.

But how shall we unite our meditation on the Mysteries with our devout recital of the prayers? How shall we with any success say one thing while we think another? (I am putting, you see, the objection as no doubt it is often put by most earnest souls.) Well, there is nothing easier. In fact, the difficult task would be to say this Psalter of Mary, these hundred and fifty *Aves*, without the interest and constant change added by the fast-succeeding mysteries. Such a form of prayer, St. Liguori says, might well be called most difficult—to many almost impossible. But once throw upon the *Paters* and *Aves* the light of the Mysteries, and monotony and dulness vanish, and the Rosary appears in its true beauty and attractive simplicity.

I said that this should be a sort of drill: so let us take to-day the first division of the Holy Rosary, and see how we can unite to the contemplation of its Five Joyful Mysteries, the devout recital of the prayers upon the beads.

You are familiar with Rosary cards, or tickets, as they are sometimes called. Did you ever see such a card without a picture? Very seldom, I think. That picture is most important; for in our minds we must have before us, that we may contemplate it, a picture, vivid and life-like and actually present to us, of the scene commemorated in the Mystery. With that scene before us, with the holy personages whom we address taking part in it, or, with us, contemplating it, we recite our decade.

## I.—THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES.

### First Joyful Mystery.

#### THE ANNUNCIATION.

It is the First Joyful Mystery, the Annunciation. See Mary, the holy maiden of Nazareth, saluted by Gabriel the messenger from God. Contemplate her humility, chastity, resignation to God's will: his reverence before the Queen of Angels, the Mother of his God.\* And then adore the Word made flesh, the fruit of Mary's womb, Jesus, God with us. O how easily do we, in presence of such a scene, and with hearts moved to their depths by such a mystery of love, how easily do we begin our decade! "Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name," hallowed for sending that Angel to that Virgin, hallowed for not sparing Thy only-begotten Son, sending Him down to be made flesh! "Thy Kingdom come," it *has* come to us with Jesus Incarnate; "Thy will be done," it *is* as perfectly done "on earth," by Mary, "as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread," canst Thou refuse us anything after giving us Thy Son? "And forgive us our trespasses," ah, our sins of pride so unlike this humility of the Word Incarnate, of Mary, of Gabriel: our sins of selfishness, so unlike this Maiden's chaste confusion: Forgive us these trespasses "as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil," the temptation, the evil of such sins "Amen."

And then we begin our *Aves*. Using the very words of that Angel of God, we salute our Blessed Lady: "Hail Mary, full of grace," of humility, resignation, chastity, "the Lord is with thee," by His grace before, by His Incarnate presence after thy *fiat*; "blessed art thou among women," how

blessed, when angels and men, and all generations call thee blessed! "and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus," now made flesh of thy pure substance. "Holy Mary, Mother of God," (Ah, see her there, in the first moment of her maternity!) "pray for us sinners" by pride, by self-will, by impurity, pray for us and shield us against these sins, "now and at the hour of our death, Amen." "Glory be to the Father," Who has sent His Son on earth to be the Son of Mary. "And to the Son," "Who has said: A body hast Thou prepared for Me, behold I come: "and to the Holy Ghost," by Whose ineffable operation of love, this mystery was wrought.

Glory be to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for this joyful mystery of the Incarnation, "as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

I would ask you, is that dry or difficult? Of course it takes more time to say these things than to think them. And I need not add that, since the depth of each Mystery is infinite, so may be the application to it of the prayers—so that no two of our Rosaries need be alike, but may be even going further and further into the sweetness of these sacred scenes, adding fruit upon fruit of pious affection and resolve, building up our lives in the spirit and practice of Christianity, and unfolding to us more and more the beauties of Christian doctrine.

### Second Joyful Mystery.

#### THE VISITATION OF ST. ELIZABETH.

But let us pass on to consider the Second Joyful Mystery of the Holy Rosary, the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth. The scene embraces the home at Nazareth, whence the Virgin Mother "set out with haste;" the long journey of close on one hundred miles to the mountain country of Hebron; the salutation of Elizabeth to the Mother of her Lord; the joyous recognition by the yet unborn Precursor of the hidden presence of the Saviour Whom he was to herald. It is a visit of charity. Ah, how unlike some of *our* visits, when with bitterness in our hearts and ill-natured gossip on our tongues, we carry sin and detraction into the homes of our friends; where our salutations are hollow, our motives selfish, our sympathy feigned, our



visits a curse and not a blessing! Let us watch that visit of Mary, praying as we watch: "Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name," for Thy love has come on earth, and is hastening this Maiden Mother's steps. "Thy Kingdom come," the kingdom of charity in deed and word. "Thy will be done on earth," in such offices of unselfish kindness, "as it is in Heaven," the realm of love. "Give us this day our daily bread," and may we in our charity break it with those that need it. "And forgive us our trespasses" against Thy law of brotherly love, "as we forgive them that trespass against us," giving us by their offence a chance of Christian forgiveness; "and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," the temptation of saying hard things and doing evil things to our brethren. "Amen."

"Hail Mary, full of grace," and bearing in thy chaste womb, along that weary journey, the Author and Giver of all grace, "the Lord is with thee," as He is with me when I rise from the altar rails after Communion; as He is with the priest who bears Him in His loving visitation to the sick and dying; "blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus," blessed and welcome His visit to our hearts and to our homes. "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners," who have so often been uncharitable visitors, bearing with us curses and not blessings, "now and at the hour of our death," that hour in which we hope for this visit to our death-beds, to be our Viaticum in our long journey. "Amen."

Glory be to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the spring and fountain-head in heaven of all true charity on earth. Amen.

### Third Joyful Mystery.

#### THE NATIVITY OF OUR BLESSED LORD.

In the Third Joyful Mystery the scene is so familiar that I need not describe it in detail. Which of you cannot place himself within the stable of Bethlehem, before Mary and her new-born Child? Look at the contradiction there of all worldiness; see how Jesus chose, instead of riches, the most utter poverty; instead of honor, the humiliation of an outcast; instead of comfort, the rigors of a manger. For such mercies how easy to hallow the

name of our Father in heaven Whose Kingdom has come to break down the pride of the kingdom of earth, Whose will has been done when it was so hard to do. In Bethlehem, the House of Bread, we may well beg for our daily bread, ask for forgiveness for our trespasses against the poverty, humility, and self-sacrifice of this little Babe, and for grace to withstand the temptation of a world offering us evil under the guise of good. And how often have we addressed to the Mother there, as she bends over her precious Babe, the words of the Hail Mary. How full she is of grace; how near her Lord lies to her; how blessed among women despite her poverty and houselessness, as she adores with Joseph and the Shepherds the fruit of her womb. "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners," who lay such store by riches, honors, and pleasures, but who see their true value measured in this stable, pray for us poor wordlings "now and at the hour of our death," when the hollow world will burst and vanish, "Amen." And with the choiring angels we join our *Gloria* to God in the highest, to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; for the peace and joy of the mystery of Bethlehem.

### Fourth Joyful Mystery.

#### THE PRESENTATION OF THE CHILD JESUS IN THE TEMPLE.

In the next mystery, the Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple, we have much sorrow mingled with our joy. For look at that aged Simeon, as he receives the Infant reverently into his arms. His aged face is radiant; for his eyes have seen Salvation, the light of Gentiles, the glory of Israel. Yet is he sad the while; and when he speaks it is to prophesy the sign of contradiction and the sword of sorrow. Forthwith, through Mary's heart, that sword has pierced; her first of Seven Dolours has come upon her; she is even now the *Mater Dolorosa*. She sees in the little One the Victim for Sacrifice, and knows that she must nourish Him and care for Him, only that in time she may give Him into ruthless hands, which will nail Him to a Cross. That Presentation is for her no mere form; she goes in obedience to a law which she might claim to be exempted from; but her obedience is generous. In the presence of that solemn act we

recite our *Paters* and *Aves*. "Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name," for accepting this little Victim here presented as our Saviour. "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven;" may our generous obedience prove thee to be King of our hearts; "Give us this day our daily bread," for day by day Thy Son is presented to Thee in Thy Temples under the form of bread, "and forgive us our trespasses," our want of obedience, of generosity, "as we forgive them that trespass against us," ah how little are their offences against us when compared with ours against Thee! "and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," especially from ungenerous disobedience.

"Hail Mary, full of grace," and now it is the grace of the first sorrow, "the Lord is with Thee," thy Victim presented to the God of Justice, "blessed art thou among women," most sorrowful woman of all, "and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus," set for the rise and fall of many, and for a sign to be contradicted. "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners"—ungenerous, disobedient sinners, "now and at the hour of our death," when we shall, like Simeon, sing our *Nunc dimittis*. "Amen."

Glory be to the Blessed Trinity, to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—the glory of the generosity and obedience of Jesus and Mary in the presentation in the Temple.

### Fifth Joyful Mystery.

#### FINDING OF THE CHILD JESUS IN THE TEMPLE.

The last Joyful Mystery is again one of Mary's Dolours. For, before finding the child Jesus in the Temple, she has for three days sought Him, sorrowing. Again, it is a scene we are familiar with. The noble Boy, seated in the Temple of Jerusalem, surrounded by the Doctors of the Law, whom He is teaching by His questions. We love to think of the joy of Mary and Joseph, when at last, through their tears, they see their lost Jesus. And we have laid many a time to heart His answer to His Mother's loving remonstrance: "Didst thou not know that I must be about My Father's business?" "Our Father," we say for His Father is also ours, "Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name,"

may we be faithful in honoring that name in our temples! "Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done," Thy business which we must be about, "on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread"—may we be taught by Thy Son, and our souls nourished with the bread of this heavenly teaching; forgive us our carelessness in doing Thy business, in listening to the teaching and questioning of Thy Son; "and lead us not into temptation"—of sloth, of wilful ignorance, "but deliver us from evil"—from ever losing Thee through our own fault, or, having lost Thee, from failing to seek Thee sorrowing. "Amen."

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee" once again to comfort thee and reward thee for thy loving and sorrowing search; "blessed art thou among women"—how the doctors must have thought thee blessed! "and blessed the fruit of thy womb, Jesus:" "Holy Mary, Mother of God" and made by Him Mother of sorrows, "pray for us sinners," that we may seek and find Jesus, "now and at the hour of our death, Amen." Ah, may we *then* have faithfully done our Father's business!"

Glory be to that Father, Who will so amply reward our faithful service: Glory be to that Son, our model, our teacher, in the one business necessary: Glory to the Holy Ghost, by Whose grace and guidance we shall find Jesus when we return to Him from our ways of sin, by Whose strength we shall come to give to the Adorable Trinity the glory that "was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen!"

I know many of you say the Rosary thus. To you it is the light and comfort of your lives. It is easy to see that you will live and die faithful to your beads. To some of you this may be, what at one time or other it has been to all, a revelation of the real nature of this glorious prayer. You now know the true way to use this weapon put into your hands by the Holy Father. Some of you see, perhaps, that through years past you have but half known and half used the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin. Others, perhaps, see now, for the first time, how easy and sweet is meditation on these saving mysteries; how naturally the prayers lend themselves to the contemplation of the scenes; and what a harmonious union is here effected between



the highest form of mental and of vocal prayer. Say your Rosaries through life, mindful of this lesson, and you will win your own victory, the victory whose prize is heaven. Say your Rosaries thus during this month (the month of October) especially, that you may successfully defend the Church of God, and win for Christendom her protection who is "terrible as an army set in battle array." Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for us.

## II.—THE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES.

Even into the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary we have found that sorrow has entered in, and so far that the last two of those Joyful Mysteries contained two out of the Seven Dolours of Mary. We now come to the mysteries of sorrow unmixed with aught of joy—the sorrow whose gloomy depths shrouded both Son and Mother, and the contemplation of which should be the chastening sorrow of our lives. In our preparation of heart for the reflection and recitation of this part of the Holy Rosary, we should pray that God would fill our hearts with sympathy for the two great Sufferers whom we shall watch from Gethsemani to Calvary, and with lively contrition for the sins that have caused the Son and Mother such exceeding sorrow. In such a disposition of mind and heart let us enter the First Sorrowful Mystery of the Rosary, the Prayer and Bloody Sweat of our Lord in the Garden.

### First Sorrowful Mystery.

#### THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN.

The gloom of night is over Jesus, as with Peter, James and John, the chosen witnesses of His glory on Thabor, He enters the Garden of His Agony. Over against Him is the City, where the traitor and the other plotters are already busied over the preparation of His arrest. See Him as, a stone's cast from the weary Apostles, He falls on His knees, and then forward and flat upon His face on the ground. His Father in heaven is laying on Him the iniquities of us all. Listen to His prayer: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me—not My will but Thine be done." See how He is abandoned by His Apostles in this supreme hour, by His sleeping Apostles: hear Him again and again praying the self-same word.

See how the force of His agony, and the weight of our sins are forcing the Blood from every pore, till His garments are crimsoned, and It runs in drops down to the ground. "My Father, . . . Thy will be done!" "Our Father Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name" for accepting this awful sorrow for sin as an atonement for our hardness of heart: "Thy Kingdom come." Ah, may something of this sorrow come to us! "Thy will be done"—the prayer, oft repeated, of Thy Son prostrate there in agony. "Give us this day our daily bread"—the daily bread of sorrow for sin—abiding sorrow for our trespasses: forgive us, Lord, "as we forgive them that trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"—from the sin that crushes Thy Son to the earth there in the Garden. "Amen."

And knowing how every pang of the Heart of Jesus found a response in the breaking heart of Mary, from whom no part of her Son's Passion was concealed, we address our Sorrowful Mother with deepest compassion and contrition; "Hail Mary, full of grace," and filled as with a sea of sorrow, "the Lord is with thee," crushing thy pure heart that ours may be moved to grief for our sins; "blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus."—Ah, there lies that fruit upon the crimsoned earth, the blessed fruit of thy womb! "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners"—whose sins are doing this to Him and to thee. "Now and at the hour of our death:" may the thoughts of this Agony of Jesus stay us up in our agony when the vision of our sins shall force the death-sweat out upon our brow, and crush our failing hearts—pray for us sinners, *then*.

"Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," for the mercy here shown to poor sinners, for the acceptance of this agony of sorrow from the Sinless One of expiation of the callousness of sinners.

### Second Sorrowful Mystery.

#### THE SCOURGING OF OUR LORD AT THE PILLAR.

Our Lord is scourged. It is the Second Sorrowful Mystery, and the awful scene is one that has, I trust, often moved us to sorrow for our sins, so terribly avenged upon the innocent flesh of

Jesus. Look at the scourges, with their horrible knots, their knots of lead, their tough, lithe lashes. See the merciless soldiers, devil-possession now. And *listen*. . . . And this is for my sin: He is innocent. It is I that ought to be there bearing the anger of my outraged God. "Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name" in this awful Mystery of Justice wreaked on my sin, and of mercy shown to me; "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done," ah, may I bear the chastisements it is Thy will to send me:—so light compared to *this*! "Give us this day our daily bread," and with it the grace of daily mortification, "and forgive us our trespasses"—our deliberate venial sins, when with Pilate we have said: I will scourge Him and let Him go—forgive us as we forgive all who have ever by Thy permission scourged us; "And lead us not into temptation" of thinking lightly of venial sin, "but deliver us from evil," from pampering this sinful flesh of ours, "Amen."

"Hail Mary," ah, Mary, to think of saluting *thee* here, in presence of thy Jesus, torn from head to foot by those demons—"the Lord is with thee," loving thee beyond all, yet letting every one of these lashes fall upon thy heart. "Blessed art thou amongst women," in the fulness of thy resignation most like the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.—See that fruit *now*! "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners," whose sinful hands have again and again raised high the scourge, pray that we may have a horror of all venial sin, of all un-Christian and luxurious self-indulgence, "now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

Glory be to the Adorable Trinity in presence of this scourging of the Son of God, and may we daily give that glory to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost by our lives of contrite penance.

### Third Sorrowful Mystery.

#### JESUS CROWNED WITH THORNS.

In the next Sorrowful Mystery we contemplate Jesus crowned with thorns, throned in mockery and saluted as King of the Jews. See His meek form there, clothed with the purple cloak through which the Blood from those mangled shoulders is fast soaking. See that crown of torment, from which the crimson gouts are pouring down the weary Face

into which those frantic men are casting their deilement. Ah, let us who love honor, and are sensitive about our dignity, look *here*, as we tell our beads. "Our Father Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name," may we honor Thee in atonement for this hideous dishonor done to Thy eternal Son! "Thy Kingdom come," for King of Kings Thou art, and He too Who bears the mock honor of a King; "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," in dishonor and humiliation here, in exaltation there. "Give us this day our daily bread," for humility is indeed the daily bread of a Christian soul. "And forgive us our trespasses"—our hasty resentment of insults, our proud assertion of our rights—"as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation" of such angry self-defence, "but deliver us from evil. Amen."

And as we think of this heartrending scene revealed to the gentle Mother who has honored that Son from the moment she knelt to worship Him in Bethlehem, can we withhold our deep compassion while we say, "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee"—and thou art with Him, thy Lord and Son in the bitter humiliation of this hour—"blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus"—blessed shall we be if, for His sake and thine, we welcome humiliations and lovingly bear insults and derision. "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners," who by our pride have joined these mockers of our Saviour, "now and at the hour of our death" our last great humiliation. "Amen."

And, as we look for the last time at that mock glorification of our Lord, do we find no reason for special fervor in our cry: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen!"

### Fourth Sorrowful Mystery.

#### JESUS CARRYING HIS CROSS.

As we pass to the next decade we find ourselves in presence of Jesus, carrying His Cross. We have often accompanied Him on that way of the Cross. In the scenes, or stations, found depicted in even our humblest chapels, we have been made



acquainted with all that Scripture and tradition have preserved of the manifold afflictions of that last journey of our Blessed Saviour—of the Cross that three times crushed Him to the ground by its weight; of the lamentation of the women; of Simon and Veronica; and most touching of all, of His meeting, on the way, Mary, His Mother. We, who have all of us to bear our cross along our own *Via Dolorosa*, we should love the comfort of this decade of the Rosary, while we walk for a time with our burthen on us, in the footsteps of Jesus carrying His Cross. "Our Father, Who art in heaven," Whose mercy to us is often measured by the weight of the cross we bear, "Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come," to us in patience beneath our cross, "Thy will be done," whatever the load it lays upon us to bear: "Give us this day our daily bread," for patience we shall want now and always; "and forgive us our trespasses"—our want of resignation, of courage beneath our crosses, our refusal to bear them in Thy Son's steps—forgive us "as we forgive them that trespass against us," when they lay, by Thy permission, the cross of their injustice or unkindness or severity upon us; "and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"—from having to bear a cross while losing by impatience all its merit and the company of Jesus.

Then, watching the Sorrowful Mother as she meets her Son cross-laden on His way to Calvary, we say our compassionate *Aves*. "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee"—how sad that He, thy Son, should be with thee *here* and in this plight! "blessed art thou amongst women"—thy sorrow the measure of thy blessedness, "and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners"—that we may be patient—"now and at the hour of our death," when the heaviest cross shall be at last laid down, and the longest road shall end.

Glory be to the Father, Who laid this Cross upon His Son; Glory be to the Son, Who bore it giving us an example that we should follow in His steps: Glory be to the Holy Ghost, by Whose grace and comfort we shall bear our crosses bravely until this world of patient suffering shall pass into the joys of the world without end. Amen.

### Fifth Sorrowful Mystery.

#### THE CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH OF OUR LORD.

We have come here to Calvary. It is there we contemplate the last and crowning mystery of sorrow: the Crucifixion and Death of our Lord. If we want to be moved to contrition for our sin, let us say this decade well. If we want the spirit of self-sacrifice in God's service, let us look at this awful self-sacrifice of Jesus for us. If we want to know what unrepentant sinners shall suffer—what shall be done in the dry wood, fit for the fire, let us consider what fiery torments the innocent Son of God suffers—let us see, as He has bid us see, what has been done in the green wood. If, in fine, we want to see how far the Sacred Heart of Jesus has loved us, and how fully the Immaculate heart of Mary has shared that love, let us see that heart opened for us upon the Cross, and the mother's heart broken for us beneath. "Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name," for this is the only Sacrifice, the only Victim worthy of Thee, and able to repair the dishonor done to Thy Name by sin. "Thy Kingdom come," Whose standard is the Cross, whose loyal subjects are those who crucify the flesh with its vices and lusts. "Thy will be done on earth" by the lovers of the Cross of Christ, "as it is in heaven" by all who in that sign have conquered. "Give us this day our daily bread;" may we love that unbloody Sacrifice daily offered in our midst, in which the Sacrifice here consummated on Calvary is renewed to the end of time. "And forgive us our trespasses," forgive us as we kneel at the pierced feet of Jesus, Thy dying Son, "as we forgive them that trespass against us," as Jesus forgave those that nailed Him to that Cross; "and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," from ever crucifying Thy Son afresh by mortal sin. "Amen."

And to her that stands there by that Cross, given us to be our Mother by Him Who hangs upon it: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee," giving thee not only this unspeakable affliction, but also strength to bear it, and to stand there, the Valiant Woman as well as the Sorrowful Mother. "Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus," hanging now above thee, the fruit of that shameful tree. "Holy

Mary," most sorrowful, "Mother of God," and henceforth our Mother also, "pray for us sinners," who lament our sins with Magdalen beneath this Cross: "now, and at the hour of our death." O Mary, stand by us when we are dying, as thou didst stand by thy dying Jesus! Show us then this mystery of sorrow, that it may bring us comfort in our hour of dereliction, and that with the crucifix in our hands and the love of the Crucified in our hearts, we may, in perfect hope and peace, commend our souls into the outstretched arms of our Saviour. "Amen."

Glory be to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for this work of our Redemption, for the sorrow that has brought us joy, and the death that has brought us life; as it was in the beginning, before sin brought death; as it is now, that one Death has conquered sin: as it ever shall be, when sin and sorrow and death shall be no more, world without end. Amen.

Think of the effect upon a Christian's life of these Five Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary, reflected upon thus week by week and year by year. Of course no one will, as a rule, unite in one *Pater* or *Ave* all that I have said of each mystery. But even if *one* such thought were allowed to throw its light upon each decade, one virtue to be asked for, one sin to be deplored, would not the Rosary be the treasure of our lives? If we have sorrow, our cross to bear, our passion to overcome, where shall we more readily find sympathy and help and strength, than in these Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary? One decade, devoutly said, would often bring peace to our troubled minds, contrition to our hard hearts, and the help of Jesus and Mary to our failing steps. Let us pray with our Holy Mother, the Church, "that by meditating on these Mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain, and obtain what they promise, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

### III.—THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES.

Glory is the end of the just. Through much tribulation they enter it. So it is with Jesus, so it was with Mary. Their lives were mysteries of sorrow. Even in the joyful scenes with which our Rosary opened, we found there was much sadness; and the gloom grew to utter darkness as it gathered

round the Man of Sorrows and the Mother of Sorrows in the mysteries from Gethsemani to Calvary.

#### First Glorious Mystery.

##### THE RESURRECTION.

But not for ever does the shadow rest on the Son of God and on His blessed Mother. The morning breaks after the dark night, and it is Easter morning. See the tomb, where on Good Friday evening the Body of Jesus was laid, dead and cold: see that tomb now, radiant with light, the resting-place of white-robed angels, and that Body, risen glorious and immortal, victorious over death, dispelling for ever the darkness of the grave. Let us feast our souls upon the glory of that scene, for here is the foundation of our faith. "Our Father Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name," hallowed in the Resurrection of Thy Son. "Thy Kingdom come," Thy bright reward for sorrow borne for Thee; "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." May we too rise from sin and walk in newness of life. "Give us this day our daily bread," a lively faith in our risen Saviour, "and forgive us our trespasses," our cold, unfruitful faith, our un-Christian fear of death, "as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation," especially against our faith, "but deliver us from evil," from our sinning against the light of this Easter morning. "Amen."

Our last Hail Marys were most sorrowful *Aves* to the Mother standing by her crucified Son; but now they are joyous congratulations to the happy and ever-glorious Mother whose Son returns to her more beautiful than ever, His face glowing with love, His wounds all turned to brightness—her joy and glory to all eternity. As we see that meeting, how gladly our *Ave* comes! "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou amongst women;" how blessed, this bright Easter day! "And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus," the first-fruit of them that sleep come to show poor shuddering souls the blessing of the grave. "Holy Mary, Mother of God"—at last thy Motherhood brings thee joy untouched by sorrow; "pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death," when the thought of this glorious mystery will rob death and the grave of their terrors. "Amen."



"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," the glory of the risen Son of God, "as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

### Second Glorious Mystery.

#### THE ASCENSION.

When next we see Jesus and Mary, in the Second Glorious Mystery, they are the centre of a group upon the summit of Mount Olivet. The Apostles are there listening to the last words of their Master. His time for going in and out among men is ended—His days of weariness and sorrow are past. From this high mount he looks upon the garden of His Agony on the slopes beneath Him, on the city that cast Him out lying across the valley, and without its walls the place of Calvary. The time has come for Him to leave the vale of tears and to go to His Heavenly Father's Kingdom, and as He is yet speaking to His Mother and His disciples, He slowly rises from their midst. With straining eyes and hearts stilled with awe, they watch His ascending form, till a cloud receives Him out of their sight. Let us too watch Jesus ascending from earth to heaven, from toil to rest, entering in at the gates that He has opened by His death, and, amid the jubilee of expectant angels, taking His seat at the right hand of His Father—the human body, the fruit of Mary's womb, for ever the joyous vision of the saints—our joy too when our happy ascension day shall come. With hearts full of that blessed hope we tell our beads: "Our Father Who art in heaven," where Jesus now has joined Thee, "hallowed be Thy Name; Thy Kingdom come." May *we* come to Thy bright Kingdom whose gates receive the Master in Whose steps we tread. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," and may our hope of heaven encourage us to do Thy will. "Give us this day our daily bread," in the strength of which we shall walk to the mount of God, "and forgive us our trespasses"—our hopeless forgetfulness of heaven, our contentment with pleasures of earth—"as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation." Father, keep us from temptations to despair! "but deliver us from evil," from the only true evil that will stop our entry into heaven. "Amen."

And looking from Jesus ascending, to Mary remaining on Mount Olivet, happy in the fulness of her hope, we say: "Hail Mary, full of grace," of hope and peace after all thy sorrow, "the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women," now that Jesus has gone up to heaven the most blessed being on earth, "and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus," sitting at the right hand of the Father. "Holy Mary, Mother of God," Mother on earth of thy God in heaven, "pray for us sinners," that like thee we may live and die in hope; pray for us, remain with us "now, and at the hour of our death. Amen."

The gates of heaven are open, and we join in the angelic song: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen." O bright mystery of hope, may our loving meditation on you be a light upon the sad days of our sojourning here!

### Third Glorious Mystery.

#### THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

In the Third Glorious Mystery of the Rosary, the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the expectant disciples, we miss from the scene, for the first time, Jesus Incarnate. His Comforter here takes His place. As the life of Jesus in the flesh was the work of the Holy Ghost, so is the life of Jesus in His mystic body, the Church, His new birth in the upper room of Jerusalem, the work of the same Holy Spirit. How gratefully we should watch this scene. See the Apostles and disciples, with the Holy Mother in their midst; the body of the Church of God waiting, as it were, for the breath of the Holy Spirit to give it life. Hear the rushing of that mighty wind, the breath of God, filling the whole house as His presence is to fill the universal Church. See the tongues of flame—symbols of Christian zeal and truth and courage; see the wondrous change already wrought, as the doors of that upper chamber open, and strong with the strength of God, that little band goes forth to conquer the world. "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come;" may it extend to every corner of the earth to which has gone forth the sound of that day of

Pentecost. "Thy will be done," by the grace of Thy comforting Spirit, "on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread," give peace to the Church, zeal to its ministers, loyalty to its people; "and forgive us our trespasses," our sloth in bringing souls to Thee, our cold, half-hearted devotion to Thy cause, "as we forgive them that trespass against us." Ah, what loyal support *we* expect when our own interests are at stake! "And lead us not into temptation," may we never grieve the Holy Spirit by our lukewarm Catholicity; "but deliver us from evil. Amen."

"Hail Mary," the central figure in that upper chamber, the joy and powerful protector of the nascent Church. Hail "full of grace, the Lord is with thee," to make thy fulness yet more full; "blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus," Who has kept His promise and sent His Comforter on earth. "Holy Mary, Mother of God," and Mother of His holy Church, "pray for us sinners," thy children longing to see thee and to feel thee near, "now and at the hour of our death"—when we shall want that Comforter, and thy presence by us, Mary.

"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," the glory rendered by the never-failing Church, "as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen." Should we not love thus to recall the presence of the Comforter on earth: His presence in the Church, teaching her all truth: His presence in our souls, by the double grace of Baptism and Confirmation? We are too apt to forget the Holy Ghost, Whose temples we are. Let us then ask Him that He would warm our hearts and enlighten our minds and recall our wandering thoughts whenever we recite the third Glorious Mystery of the Rosary.

#### Fourth Glorious Mystery.

##### THE ASSUMPTION OF OUR BLESSED LADY.

Twelve years—or, as some think, more—divide the mystery of Pentecost from the mystery of Mary's Assumption into heaven. For those years has she been the precious treasure of the Church of Christ on earth. He can spare her no longer; she must come to Him to take her place at His side as Queen

of Heaven. And so she lies down to die. It is not that her sixty years have worn her, but her love for the Son that died for her makes her die for the love of Him. And since the grave could not hold the fruit of Mary's womb, so neither can the grave, into which she is reverently laid, remain long closed above her pure body. Behold her on the bright day of her Assumption from earth to heaven. See the choirs of angels as they meet her, hailing her Queen of Angels, and conducting her to the gates of pearl. How full of gratitude for this glory of our Mother should our filial hearts be as we pray: "Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name," for this triumph of our sweet Mother. "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven;" she did Thy will most perfectly on earth, she is now nearest to Thee in heaven. "Give us this day our daily bread"—that Bread of Life which is, even to the poor bodies that receive It, the seed of immortality, the title to an assumption some day into heaven. "And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation," to carelessness in our Communion, to a want of reverence towards these bodies that so often bear the Body of Jesus, the pledge of their future glory; "but deliver us from evil. Amen."

And watching that loved form, as Christian art has often pictured it, rising amid choiring angels from this world of sorrow and death to the realm of joy unending, we join our salutations with those of the heavenly spirits, saying, with hearts of gladness: "Hail Mary, full of grace," of grace increasing for all those sixty years, "the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women." Who can see thee *now*, and not call thee blessed; welcomed into thy eternal rest by the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus! "Holy Mary, Mother of God," happy Mother, met by thy Son, not on the way of the Cross, as once, but in the gates of heaven! "pray for us sinners," who loved thee and long to see thy sweet face up there beside thy Son; pray for us, "now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

Glory be to the Blessed Trinity, for the glory of Mary entering into the joy of that world without end. Amen.



### Fifth Glorious Mystery.

#### THE CORONATION.

While the mystery of the Assumption brought us up to the heavenly gates, open to receive the soul and body of the Glorious Virgin Mary, the next and last mystery brings us past the shining threshold, and places us in the presence of the Eternal Throne itself, where Jesus is crowning His Mother Queen of Heaven. Who can tell the glories of that pageant! If on earth the coronation of a sovereign is so splendid, what shall we say of the coronation of the Queen of Angels, crowned by her Son, the King of kings, with the brightest diadem of glory! Let our decade in presence of that mystery of gladness be one of praise to the Eternal God for the wonderful things He has done for her, and for those who, even at a distance, have followed her in patiently suffering and in faithfully doing His adorable will. "Our Father, Who art in heaven," where Mary now is Queen, "hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come," reign, O Lord, in our hearts now, that, like Mary, we may reign at last with Thee. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," where every one that doth that will, shall one day be crowned. "Give us this day our daily bread," the grace to persevere from day to day till the glorious day of final perseverance; "and forgive us our trespasses," for nothing of our soul's defilement can enter heaven; "as we forgive all who trespass against us," and have given us this chance of forgiving and being forgiven; "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," the evil of forgetting, or endangering our everlasting crown. "Amen."

Our beads are nearly told. Look at this final vision of Mary. For a moment remember Nazareth and Bethlehem, Egypt, Jerusalem, Calvary. Remember the Seven Dolours, from the prophecy of Simeon to the grave of Jesus. Remember what *was*, and see what *is*. Look up, for even as we tell our beads to-day in the valley of tears, the crown that Jesus set upon Mary's brow is filling heaven with joy and brightness, and cheering the very gloom of the valley. "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee," thy joy, thy crown, for ever and forever; "blessed art thou among women," most blessed and most glorious of all the works of

God, "and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus." Thou hast shared His crown of shame, Mary, and thou sharest His crown of glory. "Holy Mary, Mother of God," O the thought of that Motherhood in Heaven! "pray for us sinners" that our penance may be rewarded, and our tears wiped away at last; pray for us now that we may persevere, and at the hour of our death that our perseverance may in that hour be crowned.

"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," glory to each Divine Person of the Blessed Trinity for the relation borne by each, Father, Son, and Spouse, to that Queen of Glory. "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

Our Rosary is ended, To the Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope, we, poor banished children of Eve, have sent up our cry, our mourning and weeping, from this valley of tears. Three hundred times have we, in the course of our fifteen decades, called on her sweet name, Mary. One hundred and fifty times have we blessed the fruit of her womb, Jesus: as many times have we implored her aid now and at the hour of our death. Surely in these Hail Marys alone we have done much—enough to make us love and bless the Rosary.

But we have done more than devoutly recite our *Paters* and *Aves* and *Glorias*. We have *meditated* on the mysteries of our redemption, from the day God sent His Angel to begin the work in the annunciation of His will to Mary, down to the day when He set upon her brow the crown that was the choicest fruit of that redemption. Through joy, through sorrow, through glory, we have lovingly and watchfully followed the steps of Jesus and Mary; and now we pray "that having meditated thus on these mysteries of the most holy Rosary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Is it possible, think you, that Rosaries thus said should be fruitless? that lives in which each day has its five mysteries—yes, or even its one mystery devoutly and reverently meditated on and woven into the eloquence of the beads—that lives thus sanctified should be given over to worldliness, or

that homes in which such daily prayer, mental and vocal, has grown to be a hallowed custom, should be other than truly Christian and loyally Catholic? Impossible! The Rosary alone, said as Mary taught St. Dominic to say it, is a pledge of salvation, and the sure sign now, as it was of old, that the belief in the truths of Christianity, and the faithful adherence to those truths in practice, is quick and energetic as ever. Now we can understand to the full what an overwhelming and invincible power is in our hands when, in union with all the Christian Church, and kneeling before Jesus, the fruit of Mary's womb, we unite our minds in contemplation of these mysteries and our voices

in sending up these prayers. O the blessed Catholic Church, where victory is assured, not only by the promises of God, but also by the might of this unconquerable prayer! Truly is she, like her glorious Queen, "terrible as an army set in battle array!" Let us only move in her ranks, use her weapons, obey her leaders, and spend ourselves in her service, and we shall share in her victory against the gates of hell, and pass from her children militant in joy and sorrow to her choirs triumphant and in glory.

Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, Help of Christians, Refuge of Sinners, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

